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ASTRONOMY IN VERSE

LANGUAGE OF THE EYES.

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Astronomy in Verse.

THE PRECESSION OF THE EQUINOXES,
THE TWELVE CONSTELLATIONS OF THE ZODIAC AND
THEIR DECANS.

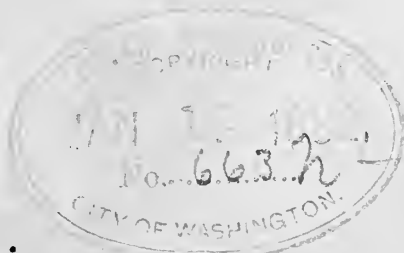
—AND—

Language of the Eyes.

33
BY E. D. NIXON.

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PREFACE.

To my many friends, because of their earnest solicitation to publish them, are these verses dedicated, with the hope that they may receive real pleasure and amusement from the perusal of them.

Please withhold your criticism, remembering that the author is without aspirations as a writer; his only object being to name together in verse, the different Constellations of the Zodiac and their Decans, so that they can be more easily remembered by those who are just entering the study of Astronomy. The student is advised to procure an Atlas of the Heavens and examine it in connection with the verses—this will greatly assist him in tracing the constellations.

E. D. NIXON.

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ASTRONOMY IN VERSE.

PRECESSION OF THE EQUINOXES.

Four thousand years ago, reviewing back,
We find that TAURUS ruled the Zodiac;
Two thousand less, and ARIES lead the host;
But PISCES now, by virtue of its post.
Each constellation in two thousand years
Advances one sign eastward, it appears.
The Precession of the Equinoxes will
In twenty-and-five thousand years fulfil
A grand cycle of the ages—some epochs end—
Some worlds burn up—some changes vast impend.

THE TWELVE CONSTELLATIONS OF THE ZODIAC AND THEIR DECANS.

PISCES. (THE FISHES.)

PISCES now leads the twelve celestial signs;
Between PISCES the Square PEGASUS shines.
The northern FISH, just south of *Merach* placed,*
Is, by its riband, to *El Rischa* traced; †
Thence north and west the golden cord extends
To *Beta*, in the western FISH, and ends.
The RIBBON forms a large triangle there,
The open part towards PEGASUS' Square.

ITS DECANS:‡

THE BAND, CEPHEUS, ANDROMEDA.

The Starry BAND the FISHES doth unite,
Reveals their place, and aids their feeble light.
King CEPHEUS is faithful to his queen,
His bright crown in the Milky Way is seen.
ANDROMEDA near PERSEUS is found,
With CASSIOPE and TRIANGLES 'round.

**Merach* is in the girdle of Andromeda.

†*El Rischa* is in the neck of the Whale.

‡DECANS—Stellar personifications or accompanying constellations. Three Decans attend each one of the Zodiacal signs.

ARIES. (THE RAM.)

Next see ARIES, with twice nine stars, arise.
But three are seen, which plainly meet the eyes.
*Arietis** reveals the Ram's right horn,
The other two his left and ear adorn.
Just north, note well, the bright TRIANGLES seen,
Just south the WHALE, with ARIES placed between.
Now *Arietis* doth the sailor guide,
And gives his course, whatever may betide.

ITS DECANS:

CASSIOPEIA, CETUS, PERSEUS.

Fair CASSIOPEIA's inverted chair—
Th' enthroned woman undoing her hair,—
Forever and aye its cycle doth roll
Around *Polaris* the present North Pole.
CETUS the whale and PERSEUS the great—
These Decans on *Aries*, constantly wait.

**Arietis*, the chief star in Aries, second magnitude.

TAURUS. (THE BULL.)

Next angry TAURUS, rushing through the sky,
 With *Aldebaran** flashing in his eye,
 Displays his shining horns, upreaching far,
 Well tipped and burnished with a lovely star.
 Bright *Hyades*† reveals his shining face,
 Sweet *Pleiades*‡ his neck and shoulders trace.
 With great dominion now he rules the night,
 Opposing him who challenges his right.

ITS DECANS:

ORION, ERIDANUS, AURIGA.

ORION belted with sword by his side
 Holds before TAURUS a leonine hide,
 And lifts up his club to strike him a blow,
 To check his career and bring his pride low.
 Winding ERIDANUS§ floweth by full.
 AURIGA|| declineth north of the Bull.

*Aldebaran, that very bright star in the V.

†Hyades, a cluster of stars like a great V, in Taurus.

‡Pleiades, the 7 stars, a cluster in Taurus.

§Eridanus—called the River Po.

||That very bright star in Auriga is Capella.

GEMINI. (THE TWINS.)

Now see the TWINS and learn their famous name,
Castor and *Pollux* in the rolls of fame.
Castor an arrow and a bow conveys,
Pollux a branch in his right hand displays.
Twin lights they shine, their different rays impart
About four-and-one-half degrees apart.
Now *Castor* glows and claims the first degree,
While *Pollux* guides the sailor on the sea.

ITS DECANS:

SIRIUS, PROCYON, LEPUS.

*Sirius** the Dog Star, prince of the sky,
Flashing and flaming ascendeth on high;
Excellent in beauty, lovely and bright,
The starry host leads in a winter's cold night.
Procyon, the Small Dog, barks from above,
While *LEPUS*, the Hare, is seen by the DOVE.

*Sirius is both a star and a constellation and is sometimes put
or the whole constellation.

CANCER. (THE CRAB.)

The feeble CRAB comes creeping up the sky,
With eighty-three dim stars; none please the eye.
But in his crest we see a nebula,
Quite like a comet in the distance far.
The northern tropic lies within this sign,
The summer solstice rightly we define.
But hence anon the Sun will southward turn.
His heat grow less, and less his rays will burn.

ITS DECANS:

URSA MAJOR, URSA MINOR, ARGO.

Behold the GREATER and the LESSER BEARS—
Yon golden groups of two important squares,
O'er the pale countries of the north they roll,
And point forever to the frozen Pole.
The SHIP ARGO the south horizon decks,
And sails below the great EGYPTIAN X.*

*The X is composed of five stars of different constellations.

LEO. (THE LION.)

The mighty LION, the fierce summers rage,
For Judah stands within the sacred page.
The marshal *Regulus* of Roman fame
Bedecks his mighty neck with brilliant flame.
Six smaller stars, about his head and face,
A SICKLE form, which plainly we may trace.
Great *Denebola* tips his bushy tail,
Reveals his course, and lights his eastern trail.

ITS DECANS :

HYDRA, THE CUP, THE CROW.

The sparkling HYDRA near th' equator rolls,
And full one-fourth of the ecliptic holds.
Alphard alone lights up the SERPENT'S heart;
A rhombus figure shapes his head in part.
The crescent CUP his center well defines,
The CROW his back and eastern part outlines.

VIRGO. (THE VIRGIN.)

The gentle VIRGIN rising next is seen;
One hundred stars attend the lovely queen.
But *Spica** first, which crowns the Golden Corn,
The left hand of the VIRGIN doth adorn.
Within the pathway of the Moon it lies,
And with delight attracts the sailor's eyes.
From it the distance of the Moon can be
Determined, and the longitude at sea.

ITS DECANS:

COMA, BOOTES, CENTAURUS.

Fair COMA's Milky Way, dishevelled light,
And nebulae, enchant the smiling night;
While great BOOTES drives his northern teams,
As from his left knee bright *Arcturus* beams
With flashing rays, and leads his faithful Sons,
While CENTAUR on the south horizon runs.

**Spica* the chief star in Virgo.

LIBRA. (THE SCALES.)

LIBRA, the Scales, now lifts the balance high
'Twixt the days and nights, and divides the sky.
The Sun in this gives equal day and night,
An equipoise of measures just and right.
Now, a quadrilateral figure find,
Between VIRGO and SCORPIO outlined :
Two stars north-east and two south-west will be—
The northern and the southern SCALES we see.

ITS DECANS:

THE CROWN, CROSS, VICTIM.

The northern CROWN now claims our eager eyes,
Whose diamonds twinkle in the distant skies.
Near bright *Arcturus* is the beauty viewed,
With eight small stars of different magnitude.
The CROSS here lies along the Milky Stream ;
The VICTIM doth in dreadful anguish seem.

SCORPIO. (THE SCORPION.)

Monstrous SCORPIO in his mighty bent
Takes in a double space—a vast extent.
His enormous head to the north-west lies,
His long winding tail to the south-east flies;
Thus resembling the figure of a kite,
Illumes the heavens and multiplies its light.
*Antares** first inflames his burning heart
Refulgent glows and lights up every part.

ITS DECANS:

THE SERPENT, SERPENT BEARER, HERCULES.

'Twixt the CROWN and SCALES does the SERPENT lie;
He tracks the ether and divides the sky.
The SERPENT BEARER now the SERPENT holds,
With firmness, and unwinds his ample folds.
HERCULES by the SERPENT BEARER stands
On DRACO's head, and lifts his mighty hands.

**Antares*, the chief star in Scorpio.

SAGITTARIUS. (THE ARCHER.)

In the south-east the starry ARCHER spy,
With bow and arrow drawn across the sky;
The bow is bent and swift the barbed dart
Thrusts the monstrous SCORPION to its heart.
A large Milk Dipper, near the Milky Way,
In neat outlines it doth, inverted, lay.
The handle's west; the figure plainly viewed,
And shines with stars of different magnitude.

ITS DECANS:

LYRA, DRACO, ARA.

The starry HARP lies south of DRACO's head,*
But *Lyra*† first, for brightness, takes the lead.
And placed in front beyond the rest displays
Surpassing beauty and refulgent rays.
DRACO, amid the constellations, twines.
While ARA burns and near the DRAGON shines.

*Draco's head is distinguished by means of four stars three, four and five degrees apart, forming an irregular square; the two upper ones are of the second magnitude.

†Lyra, the chief star in the constellation Lyra.

CAPRICORNUS. (THE GOAT.)

Old CAPRICORNUS marks the "Southern gate."
The Sun stands still awhile and seems to wait,
And gives the longest nights and shortest days,
While chilling blasts o'ercome his feeble rays.
Now a line from *Lyra* through *Altair* drawn,
Points southward to the head of CAPRICORN.
Two stars, (one double) of the third degree,
Two degrees apart ; a triangle see.

ITS DECANS:

AQUILA, DELPHINUS, SAGITTA.

AQUILA now divides the yielding skies
With ardent wing, and to the westward flies.
But *Altair* first, and brightest of the three,
With luster shines and claims the first degree.
The DOLPHIN,* with his diamond head, we spy
In sportive mood, and SAGITTA near by.

*The Dolphin, called Job's Coffin

AQUARIUS. (THE WATERBEARER.)

To close the scene, AQUARIUS behold,
With his eight-and-one hundred stars all told.
East of the GOAT, from where his URN inclines,
In golden light, a shining river winds
To *Fomalhaut*, the sailor's faithful star,
Which gives his course when on the seas afar.
The hand and handle make the letter Y.
The URN is seen and plainly meets the eye.

ITS DECANS:

THE SOUTHERN FISH, PEGASUS, CYGNUS.

The southern FISH swims in the river south,—
At *Fomalhaut* it opens wide its mouth.
Now see PEGASUS and his noted Square,*
In four bright stars quite equi-distant there.
The silver SWAN flies down the Milky Way,
On pinions swift and sings her mournful lay.

*The Square of Pegasus is formed by four bright stars of the second magnitude, situated about fifteen degrees apart. Of the two western stars, the northern one is called Scheat, the southern one Markab. Of the two eastern, the northern one is called Alpheratz, the southern one Algehib. Alpheratz is in the head of Andromeda and is common to both it and Pegasus. Algenib, Alpheratz and Caph in the chair of Cassiopeia are on the prime meridian and indicate its course through the Pole. Alpheratz, Caph and the Polar Star are in a straight line.

THE DIAMOND OF VIRGO.

Now bright *Arcturus*, *Denebola* seen,
 With *Spica* south which lights the Virgin queen,
 A large triangle form of equal blaze,
 Refulgent glow and dart surpassing rays.
 Turn northward now and *Cor Caroli* there
 The vertex is, the base, the former pair.*
 The sparkling jewel shines with dazzling glow :
 Behold we have the Diamond of VIRGO.

(Comes to the Meridian in May.)

**Arcturus* and *Denebola* the base.

THE EGYPTIAN X.

Betelgeuse in ORION'S shoulder see,
 The Greater and the Lesser *Dog* : these three
 A triangle form, th' apex is below
 In *Sirius*, the prince of this trio.
 To the south-east, the bright *Naos* is seen
 In the south-west, the DOVE, with olive green.
 Th' apices at the glowing Prince are crowned
 And thus the great Egyptian X is found.
 (Overhead in March.)

NAUTICAL STARS.

See *Arietis*, *Aldebaran* there,
 And *Pollux* too, one of the famous pair :
 The marshal *Regulus* of Roman fame,
 And *Spica* bright, which burns with golden flame.
Antares, *Altair*, *Fomalhaut* in line
 With *Markat* last, complete the useful nine.
 Along the pathway of the Moon they lie,
 And fill with hope the anxious sailor's eye.
 From each the distance of the Moon can be
 Determined, and the longitude at sea.

MORAL.

Who made ORION and the Seven Stars
And gave their beauty and their secret laws?
Inlaid the heavens with wheeling worlds of light,
To chant His praise, and beautify the night?
Who made the Sun and Planets in their course,
And keeps them there, by universal force?
Who made the Earth, the mountains, sea and air,
The seasons too, and all their products rare?
All beasts and fowls and living things we see,
And all mankind? who made both you and me?
The great "I AM!" He also gave His Son;
Believe His Word, and by His love be won.

APPENDIX.

THE PLANETS.

There are eight planets belonging to the Solar System, viz: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune.

Mercury is the nearest planet to the Sun, his distance being about 37 millions of miles. He is also the smallest, except the asteroids, being about eleven times smaller than the Earth. The length of his year is equal to three of our months.

Venus, second in order, is about 68 millions of miles from the Sun, and is only one-eleventh smaller than the Earth. Her day is about the length of our day, but her year is equal to only $7\frac{1}{2}$ of our months. She is the most brilliant of all the planets and is easily distinguished from them on that account.

The Earth is a little more than 92 millions of miles from the Sun. We are too well acquainted with her to need comment here.

Mars is the next; his orbit lies beyond that of the Earth and he is the first of the exterior planets. His mean distance from the Sun is 145 millions of miles. His day is about three-quarters of an hour longer and his year about ten months and a half longer than ours. His seasons are therefore about the same as ours. He is easily distinguished by his ruddy color. His size is seven times less than the earth.

Jupiter is next and the largest of all the planets. His orbit lies beyond the asteroids. His mean distance from the Sun is 490 millions of miles, and he is thirteen hundred times as large as the Earth. His day is about 10 hours; his year is equal to twelve of our years, he is attended by four satellites and numerous belts. The revolutions of his satellites are similar to those of the planets about the Sun, and thus, in miniature, they fitly represent the Solar System. To properly appreciate the resplendent beauty of this mighty world he should be viewed through a telescope. He is easily distinguished from all the other stars by his magnitude and splendor, appearing nearly as bright and as large as Venus to the naked eye.

Saturn's orbit lies between Jupiter and Uranus. His mean distance from the Sun is 900 millions of miles and he is seven hundred times as large as the Earth. His day is ten-and-a-half hours long and his year is equal to thirty of ours. He is attended by eight satellites and diversified with numerous belts and dark spots. Viewed through a telescope his appearance is truly wonderful,

being surrounded by a magnificent ring of perpetual light, which is more brilliant than the planet itself.

Uranus comes next; his mean distance is 1800 millions of miles from the Sun and he is more than seventy times as large as the Earth. His year is equal to eighty-four of ours; he is attended by six satellites.

Neptune is the last planet belonging to our System, so far as we know. He was discovered about thirty-five years ago. His mean distance from the Sun is about 3000 millions of miles, and he is one hundred times as large as the Earth. He is attended by one satellite. The Sun himself is thirteen hundred thousand times as large as the Earth.

Jupiter, Saturn and Neptune are now situated in the Sign Taurus. About the 15th of April, 1882, Jupiter will move into Gemini. He travels about one sign each year; so that it is easy to trace him and to know what constellation he is in. Saturn traverses one sign in two years and a half. He will remain in Taurus till the middle of 1883. Mars travels one sign in about two months so that when we have once located him, we can trace him through the constellations. He is now in Gemini, (Jan. 1882.)

When we see such displays of wisdom, grandeur and beauty by the Almighty as are found among these mighty worlds of light we may well conclude that they were created for the enjoyment and admiration of the teeming millions of intelligent beings who inhabit them. Why should they not be?

“The heavens declare the glory of God and
The firmament showeth His handy work.
Day unto day uttereth speech and night
Unto night showeth knowledge. There is no
Speech nor language where their voice is not heard.”

LANGUAGE OF THE EYES.

*What wonders do the eyes unfold?
Of heart, of mind, of thoughts untold,
Of hate intense, of love sincere,
Truth, honor, guilt and shame appear.*

GRAY EYES.

The Gray eye *clear* and *quick*, is wise,
Is great, is true—the king of eyes—
It is the upright one who stands
With equal justice in his hands.

'Tis honest brave and manly, too,—
To plighted faith is ever true ;—
Appeals to justice and to law,
And rules the world in peace and war.

The *dark* Gray eye deep thought reveals—
To cause and argument appeals;
The reason why, the bottom fact
It does and always will exact.

The *steel* Gray eye is keen and bright,
In wit and humor takes delight ;
The mind is strong and leads the way ;
Unwilling foes and friends obey.

The *shrewish*, *restless*, *wild* Gray eye,
We see too oft, we don't deny:
'Tis artful, selfish, sharp as steel,
And loves to give the sudden deal.

The *cold* Gray eye, that rayless ball,
For self alone is all in all.
'Tis heartless, bold, a man of might,
Who loves the wrong more than the right.

Gray eyes are intellectual and firm—they are the strong side of human nature.

BLUE EYES.

The *soft* Blue eye of love doth tell,
Hope, faith and truth within do dwell.
These are the beauties of the mind—
The graces of the soul you find.

The *dark* Blue eye, that lovely light,
Is earnest, truthful, cheerful, bright.
Herein a noble soul presides,
For you a noble heart provides.

The *steel* blue eye has deepest skill,
The calmest poise, intensest will,
Unbounded faith in self you find,
Aggressiveness and greed combined.

Blue eyes are stubborn and coquettish. They are the gentle side of human nature.

BLUES AND GRAYS.

The dark Blue eye with Grey halo
The truth of all will see and know :
The sentinel upon the stand,
Who holds the treasure in his hand.

Resolved and watchful to the end,
An honest foe, a lasting friend ;
But if he change, it is for life,
Regardless of the fearful strife.

The Gray Blue eye we much admire
For real wit and keen satire :
'Tis brave, *inventive* and astute,
A princely eye of good repute.

The Blue Gray eye, a lovely hue,
Coquettish, cheerful kindly, true,
Denotes great heart as well as mind
'Tis *imitative* and refined.

BLACK EYES.

The *large* Black eye well formed and set
A brilliant orb but rarely met,
Full of passion, intense desire,
Awakes the soul with living fire.

The *sleepy* Black eye will surprise,
All those not versed in reading eyes;
It tells you of the frequent slip
Betwixt the cup and ruby lip.

Of the *small hard* Black eye beware,
Look sharp, there's danger lurking there;
'Tis watchful, wicked and 'tis keen.
The thing it does is not yet seen.

Black eyes are crafty and passionate. They are the furious side
of human nature.

BROWN EYES.

The *dark* Brown eye is full of life,
'Tis *eager, anxious* for the strife;
Is full of fun and loves debate,
Its strong desires do not abate;

Artistic, skillful and correct,
In business quick, and can detect
The meaning of the hidden line,
The secrets of the heart define.

The *light* Brown eye with brilliant flash
And laughing brightness makes the dash;
'Tis *eager, anxious* to the end.
A constant lover, tender friend:

The *red* Brown eye is eager, quick,
And with the word will give the lick;
Make him your friend and keep him so,
This will be best as you should know.

The *little* Brown eye trimmed with black,
Is full of tricks behind your back :
'Tis selfish, hidden, very sly,
We all do well to watch this eye.

Brown eyes are eager, anxious and lively. They are the active side of human nature.

HAZEL EYES.

The hazel eye—happy trio,
Is so bewitching who can know ?
Coquetting, crafty, lively, gay,
Three cheers for the Blue, Brown and Gray.

Light hazel eyes are vivacious and lively. They are the funny side of human nature.

DARK HAZEL EYES.

The hazel eye of deeper hue,
(The triune Black and Gray and Blue.)
Is quiet, crafty, stubborn, sly,
A secret and perplexing eye.

Deep Hazel eyes are intelligent but quiet. They are the uncertain side of human nature.

The eye that squints, and rolls and leaps
And lifts the lid, suspicion keeps :
It shows unbalanced mind and thought,
Though always learning, never taught.



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